

HOUSE RESOLUTION 273  
By Hargrove

A RESOLUTION to direct the Tennessee Regulatory Authority to research, develop and formulate a program to facilitate access by underserved school-age children to technology-based information tools and advanced technology.

WHEREAS, technology-based information tools, such as the personal computer and the Internet, are becoming increasingly critical to educational and economic advancement; and

WHEREAS, the ability to effectively and efficiently employ this advanced technology is progressively essential for full participation in Tennessee's economic, political, and social life; and

WHEREAS, there is a continuously growing divide between school-age children with access to these information tools and advanced technology and those children without such access; and

WHEREAS, it is well-established and generally acknowledged that as information technology gains an ever-increasing role in our children's educational and economic lives certain children will be left behind in the information age with serious repercussions; and

WHEREAS, the resulting digital divide threatens to impede the health of our communities, the development of a skilled workforce, and the economic welfare of our State; and

WHEREAS, certain entities in both the private and the public sector have surplus technology related goods or excess capacity that could be contributed to and utilized by school-age children who otherwise lack direct and personal access to such advanced technology; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds that it is in the best and future interest of Tennessee to increase and expand access to information technologies for underserved populations and areas, and that the Tennessee Regulatory Authority should formulate a plan for a pilot program to facilitate access to educational technology by school-age children; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That the Tennessee Regulatory Authority is hereby directed, within existing resources, to research, develop and formulate a plan for a program whose purpose is to facilitate access, with the voluntary assistance and voluntary contributions of private industry and interested governmental entities, to information tools and educational technology by underserved school-age children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the plan should serve as the basis and framework for a program, relative to advanced educational technology, through which the Authority may organize and facilitate a voluntary collaboration among private industry and federal, state and local governments whereby their goods and/or services may be contributed and utilized.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That in developing the plan the Authority, shall consult with the Department of Education, the Department of Human Services and any other appropriate state agency, to develop criteria for determining the eligibility of underserved

school-age children for this program and implementing the plan as a pilot program. Such pilot program shall provide for a selection of eligible candidates that is equally distributed between urban and rural areas and distributed equally among the grand divisions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Tennessee Regulatory Authority shall submit the plan, along with recommendations for implementing the plan, to the Speaker of the House, the Speaker of the Senate, and the Governor no later than March 15, 2001.